

# POTOMAC / GARRETT STATE FOREST

## ANNUAL WORK PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2017



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Potomac-Garrett State Forest  
FY-17  
Annual Work Plan



**Potomac- Garrett State Forest  
FY-17 Annual Work Plan**

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## **I. State Forest Overview**

The Potomac-Garrett State Forests situated in southwestern Garrett County in Western Maryland have the distinction of being the birthplace of forestry conservation in Maryland. The generous donation of 1,917 acres by the Garrett Brothers in 1906 not only serves as the foundation of the Garrett State Forest, but is the root of both Maryland's present Public Lands system and Forest Service. Mountain forests, streams and valleys make up the nearly 19,000 acres of this State Forest. The forest cover is predominantly a second growth mixed hardwood forest dominated by mixed oaks, sugar and red maples, black cherry, basswood, ash and birch. The geography of this area provides for a wide range of growing conditions from the harsh, wind and ice swept ridge tops of Backbone Mountain to the deep rich slopes above the North Branch of the Potomac River. Much of the State Forestlands contain excellent quality hardwoods.

## **II. Annual Work Plan Summary**

In addition to the routine operations and management of the State Forest, the FY-17 Annual Work Plan for Potomac-Garrett State Forest details five Special Management Projects and nineteen Land Management Projects that will be the focus of the State Forest management staff for FY-17. All projects and proposals within this Plan have been developed to meet one or more of the Land Management Guidelines and Objectives as seen in the Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan including:

***Forest Economy:*** management activities with a purpose to maintain an economically sustainable forest and contribute to the local economy through providing forest-related employment and products

***Forest Conservation:*** management activities with a purpose to protect significant or unique natural communities and elements of biological diversity, including Ecologically Significant Areas, High Conservation Value Forests and Old Growth Forests. Old Growth forest management serves to restore and/or enhance old growth forest structure and function.

***Water Quality :*** management activities designed to protect or improve ecological functions in protecting or enhancing water quality.

***Wildlife Habitat:*** management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance the ecological needs of the diversity of wildlife species and habitat types.

***Recreation and Cultural Heritage:*** management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance areas that serve as visual, public camping, designated trails, and other high public use areas.

### **A. Special Management Projects Include:**

1. **Continued Development of the Certified Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan** - with special focus on addressing items identified as in need of improvement as a result of the 2015 FSC/SFI Certification Audits.
2. **ESA Management Plan Development** – Forest management staff will begin to work with Natural Heritage staff to develop management plans for the 34+ ESA areas identified on the forest.
3. **Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring** – Completion of the 5- year project to re-inventory and redefine stands on the entire forest. With the initial effort to collect forest wide data completed, FY-17 will allow a thorough analysis of this complete data set from which further management plans will be derived. Inventory work will continue in the form of follow-up monitoring protocols associated with the initial inventory and certification requirements.
4. **Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) Inventory and Control Work** - The Sustainable Forest Management Plan calls for various responses to NNIS and the Forest Inventory Project has allowed for a broad view of the problem forest wide.
5. **Lostland Run Recreational Access Restoration Project** - In January of 2012, the Governor announced approximately \$23 million in the proposed capital budget for public land projects that were to support nearly 300 jobs, help restore the environment, reduce energy usage, and improve services to visitors and citizens. Approximately \$800,000 of this will be directed to improving the public access and trail network on the Potomac-Garrett State Forests in 2016. Improvements are planned for Lostland Run Access.

#### **B. Land Management Projects Include:**

- Continuation of the Watershed Protection Project mitigating impacts of the harmful forest pest carried out as: Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Mitigation / Red Spruce Restoration.
- Continuation of the Ecosystem Restoration Project involving control of invasive, exotic plants forest wide.
- 2 Wildlife Habitat Projects affecting 67 ac.; involving 34 ac. of pine thinning and 33 ac. of hardwood thinning to conserve and protect critical wildlife habitats
- 17 Silvicultural Projects including:
  - 15 Intermediate Harvests on 211 acres, and
  - 2 Regeneration Harvests
    - 4-acre Red Pine Salvage/Regeneration Cut

## 6-acre Hardwood Regeneration Cut

6 Noncommercial Silvicultural practices to promote regeneration including:

3 Projects to control interfering and undesirable tall woody vegetation to promote seedling establishment over 65 acres;

3 Projects to control interfering and undesirable fern, grass and dewberry to promote seedling establishment over 108 acres;

Forest harvest operations are undertaken to utilize mature and dead/dying/diseased trees; to thin overstocked stands; to improve and diversify wildlife habitat; to effectively correct public safety concerns and issues; to reduce the forests vulnerability to insect attack, disease or wildfire hazard; to facilitate certain approved research needs; to improve certain aesthetic aspects of an area; and to improve the proportions of age class and species diversity within stands and management blocks. This forest has been intensively managed for over 100 years, utilizing both even and uneven-aged techniques via selective removals and regeneration harvests. Early records indicate that as cut over land was acquired, foresters ‘culled’ the forest, removing the poorly formed and damaged timber left behind in the wake of the cut and run practices employed by early timber speculators. By removing these undesirable trees, newly forming seedlings were released from competition and were thus cultured into the future growing stock of trees that we enjoy today. The benefits of this work have been significant including: improved wildlife habitat diversity, improved forest health and more abundant mast production, improved utilization of gypsy moth damaged trees, reduced forest fire hazard, and the considerable financial contribution of management to the State and local economies, as well as to those employed in the forest products industry.

The FY-17 Annual Work Plan calls for 13 harvests on 288 acres, accounting for the harvest of approximately 770,000 Bd. Ft. of saw timber, putting an estimated \$197,188 worth of raw wood products out into the local markets. Much of the silvicultural work laid out in this work plan is focused on initiating seedling development to better insure regeneration successes in future harvests. Much of the value of the harvests in the work plan will be directed back into the forest providing the essential investment in pre-harvest cultural work that will assure the long term sustainable management of these important forest resources.

The cultural operations and management projects outlined within the FY-17 Annual Work Plan are selected to provide significant contributions to sustainability of the forest resources found within the Potomac-Garrett State Forest and the ecosystems associated with it.